

Shall Women Vote?

BY NELLIE PARKER HENSON

"Veni, vidi, vici," Colonel Harvey can say, for he cannot add "vici," for he did not conquer. He is a brilliant man, but had no case. The little "graveyard scene" to which I have referred before was very pathetic, but it lacked truth. He did not know whose grave it was that had no stone. If a woman's, it could not have had one inscribed "Died for her country." But there is a case here in America at the battle of Monmouth, N. J., in 1778, where Molly Pitcher took her wounded husband's place at the cannon and fought through the rest of the battle. There is a "monument" to her on the old battlefield of Monmouth. So the "old argument" is here proven that if we "fight" for our country we too may have a "monument." But a woman is not made anatomically to fight. The Amazons, a race of fighting women, cut off their right breast because it interfered with fighting. Would the suffragettes be brave enough for that? They still have their bodies as much as other women, but if they do the work of men, they will lose all that beautiful and womanly.

Some one recently sent me all the literature of the "Equal Suffrage League," and I have read it conscientiously, but I see nothing that makes me dare to urge women to forsake the old teachings. It's lawlessness, not womanliness, I read this in the Centurion some time ago. "In recent months intelligent women having at heart the cause of winning for their sex actual participation in the making and administration of laws, have mobbed members of the English cabinet and committed other acts of lawlessness, which seems to prove that woman's suffrage offers no guarantee of greater peace in the world or of larger respect for the main essential of public security."

Of all disgusting spectacles, it is to see a woman fighting in the public streets. With clothes torn from her body, hair tumbling down and eyes bloodshot with rage, she unsexes herself and should be carried to jail and sent to the eyes of all decent citizens. She cries: "Give me liberty!" but it's the "liberty of death." Death to home and death to her soul. The women who attend so many meetings are the ones whose children (if they have any) have to be cared for by the neighbors.

As for Professor Thomas, of Baltimore, whose address the league has printed in full, saying that boys love their mothers, but that their mothers "diminish their respect for them," I cannot agree. Our sons render us homage that the world cannot give. To them we are perfect, and their pure idealized love turns the most ordinary looking woman into a Madonna. It's a known fact by people who see much of the sick and suffering that when any terrible calamity happens, in death or when dying, that no matter how old the man he always cries out:

be happy, knowing they had made life glad for others. Oh, women, though your light may be dim, do not despair! Polish up your lenses, keep your light burning, for some storm-tossed soul is looking for God's love, and your light is the one by which he is steering.

What has suffrage done for women? In twenty States where men are voters laws have been passed limiting the hours that a woman may be employed, but in not one of the States where women vote is there a law restricting the hours of labor for women. This was brought out in an argument on woman's suffrage in Albany. Richard Barry says, too, that "in the twenty States where women do not vote the working hours for women have been limited. In Wyoming and Colorado, Utah and Idaho, where women have been voting for periods varying from fourteen to forty-one years, no laws have been passed limiting the hours of labor, except in the State of Colorado, where a law has been passed applying to women who must stand while at work."

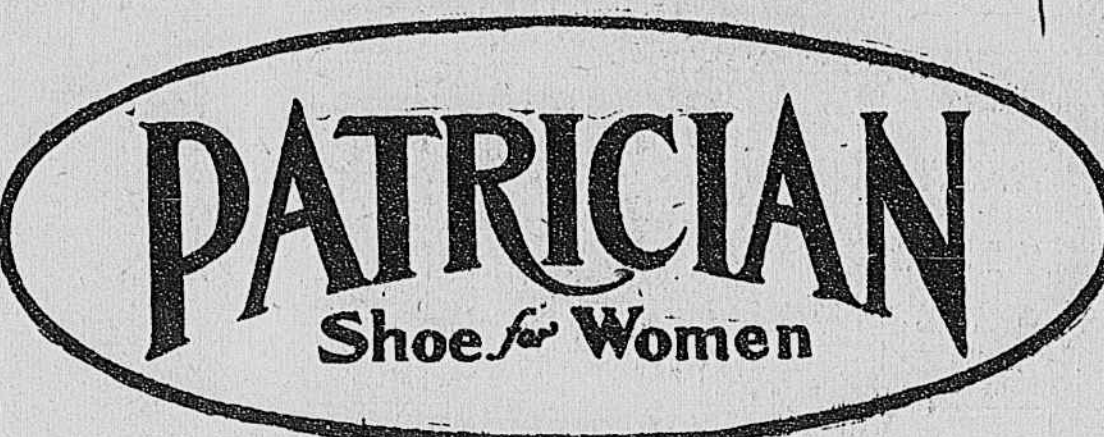
Juvenile crime has increased in the city of Denver during the last seven years of eight years greater than the increase of crime in any other city of like size. Remember, the boy makes the man. He found further that the wages paid to women are actually less in the States where the women vote than in the States where they are denied the suffrage, probably due to the fact that more women have to work. In Denver women called at headquarters in droves during the election and the average sum given them was \$10. Election day \$17,000 was given women in the different precincts.

This looks like improvement in our body politic! The women who have property are making a cat's-paw of the working women. They argue "no taxation without representation." The poor woman has nothing to tax, so she need not worry. It is the same in strikes. The leaders take all the money, get all the benefits, while the poor working men starve, carrying the burden. Rich women may be to some extent independent of men, for they can hire "taxi's" to take them out at night; hire men, if necessary. I reckon, do as they please, and need not be criticized, but the poor woman needs man's help and his protection. Listen! Hear you not the baying of the hound and the rush of the mad men as they are hunting the fugitive, whose crime is worse than murder? See you broken-hearted mother left behind, clasping her dying, dishonored child to her aching breast? It may be you! It may be your child or sister! What could even a militant suffragette do to help her? The only thing that keeps men who are beasts under control is fear—the knowledge that men will defend their homes. Which would she prefer protected, your money or your honor? But they do protect our money also. They know far more about finance than we. So be careful, you tell men what you can do! Did you see the account of a man who stopped supporting his wife and when the judge asked "why," in promptly said because he was tired of hearing her say what suffrage could do and what she could do, so that he did not have to go on and do it—to support herself? They compromised by the wife saying she would not talk suffrage any more, and he said, then, he would support her.

To me "suffrage" has never been a question of "brains." It's who is fitted for it. God made man and woman to form a perfect whole. Man, with brawn and sinews, anatomically perfect for work; no organs to be endangered by it. He benefited a whole world by hard work. Woman, weak physically, smaller hands, smaller feet, delicate and sweet. She has just what man lacks, forming a perfect whole. The body has many parts, each with its specific work. The eyes to see, the ears to hear, the hands to work, the feet to walk. One cannot do the work of the other. If any part is affected, all parts feel it—are in sympathy. Each member just as important as the other. So it is with our body politic. God is the head; men are the patient hands and feet of service. Women are the heart upon which all depends, sending the life blood throbbing through their veins and giving them the impetus to work, to do their daily tasks.

Man commands affairs, but woman commands man! Is a man's lot such a happy one? The Emperor of China keeps a cordon of soldiers around him, highly educated men from jumping into the mouth of the crater. Why? Is life so sweet? In our Christian country, in Chicago, I read that they have passed a law which forces owners to stretch across the second story openings on all buildings having rotundas more than three feet in height to protect those on the main floor from being struck by persons making suicidal leaps. Does this look like the ideal life they want women to live? With the cares of home and children (for we will have to keep these duties, too, if we are blessed with a home, will we not?) added to those of State and making a living, will not the list of suicides be increased? Rich women may want more employment, but the poor have more than enough now. Civic improvement is the natural outgrowth of knowledge and refinement. This new country is waking up to the fact that the beautiful helps people to be better. About six years ago the Lee Monument stood in an old field. Look at it now! Richmond is going ahead, and it's due to the public spirited Chamber of Commerce. The women have happened to drop into affairs at a favorable moment. If we want to have a "city beautiful" if the funds can be found.

In Paris men spend annually \$50,000 for trees alone, nurseries, etc. When horticultural experts found that the soil was not rich enough for the development of certain trees, they put on a shallow top soil of rich earth and trained the roots of the trees to grow horizontally instead of vertically. It takes money, and we need ours just as much as the Parisians. Do you realize that half the men of the world are but drudges, but men in the mines scarcely ever see daylight, digging and delving in danger of death, for in this conservation of man, the reward is in mere existence for their families. Men in clerical positions are confined all day all drudging for their families. It is wonderful how men have voluntarily taken upon their shoulders the burden of life! Can't you see the army of tollers climbing the hill of life? Glad in the khaki, dust-colored uniform of gray, some with one leg, bent and ing lost them in our service, but burdens so heavy, still plodding patiently steps faltering and the heart over-taxed, ceases to beat. It's a brave army, only the slow beat of the martial music, only the slow beat of the poor tired heart. They have "fought" the "fight" and God places the laurel wreath upon their brow with "Well we tear it from them? We, for whom long as men and women have fought, we do not need suffrage. Many years ago we came near having an international complication because an American woman was forcibly detained in a harem in the East. If you do not want it, I have been asked to form an "Anti-Suffrage League," but I do not believe in it. Women have to all sorts and conditions of men. I will conclude by a brief resume of what suffrage will do for women. It will increase suicides! Women being unfit for hard work, it will cause ill health and delicate, probably deformed, children. It will increase juvenile crime, for mothers won't have time to increase here already. It will make women disturbers of the peace, setting an example of resistance to authority. It will make women politicians, to the loss of her politeness, refinement and, yes, her beauty, and will, in the end, without being defiled, therefore, what does it profit us if we gain the "ballot" and "lose our own souls?"



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